

3. Consultation and Coordination

Public Involvement

Throughout the feasibility study process, the study team gathered public input on issues, possible actions and alternatives. The scoping process included meetings with agencies and organizations, public meetings and workshops, newsletters, a web page, and written public comments. These sources were used to identify the issues, alternatives, and impact topics to be considered for the feasibility study and environmental analysis and to keep the public informed and involved throughout the study process.

PUBLIC SCOPING AND WORKSHOPS

In November 1999, Congress directed the National Park Service (NPS) to complete a special resource study (feasibility study) of the Gaviota Coast, and to determine whether the area, or a portion of it, was eligible and suitable to be managed as a unit of the National Park System. The NPS initiated the study process in January, 2000, with a series of meetings with key agencies and organizations. Three public meetings were held in Goleta, downtown Santa Barbara, and Lompoc in March 2000. Invitations were mailed to approximately 900 individuals, including a list obtained from Santa Barbara County of 300 landowners of 900 of the parcels in the project area; lists of agricultural and other businesses; and distribution lists used by Santa Barbara County and the Los Padres National Forest. Approximately 350 people attended these public meetings. Media coverage was high. The NPS also sought meetings with Gaviota-area representatives of public agencies, and has endeavored to meet with any private groups that have requested meetings.

Comments provided at the public and individual meetings were used to identify issues and concerns that the team should address in the feasibility study. Approximately 200 responses were received during or closely following the public meetings by letter, comment sheets, and e-mail.

On July 26-27, 2000, the NPS study team hosted two all-day workshops for agricultural interests and others, aimed at defining desired future conditions along the Gaviota Coast. The July 26 workshop was attended by representatives of agricultural interests in the study area nominated by the Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau and Cattlemen's Association. Others were also allowed to participate. Attendees included Farm Bureau and Cattlemen's Association members and staff; farmers and ranchers from within and outside of the study area; Vista de las Cruces school district board and staff; Forest Preservation Society representatives, and a county representative. The July 27 workshop was attended by approximately 30 persons representing a broad spectrum of interests, including local and state government, agricultural organizations, local and national environmental organizations, local property owners, and Chumash Native Americans.

On October 18-19, 2000, at the request of Vandenberg AFB personnel, NPS organized a visit to Point Reyes National Seashore and invited additional Santa Barbara county agricultural and environmental interests. The program included presentations from the Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), local ranchers from within and outside of Point Reyes NS, a tour of the park including ranches and natural and historic areas, and a discussion of local business interests and visitor impacts.

The scoping comment period for this study originally extended until May 31, 2000. Through the initial public scoping process, it became apparent that the study process was generating controversy. At the same time, the NPS adopted new policies for environmental impact analysis and decision-making which required that Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's), rather than EAs, be prepared to accompany Special Resource Studies that consider additions to the National Park System. Because of the controversy and the policy changes, the NPS determined that an EIS was likely to be

necessary. The study team then took the actions necessary for the preparation of an EIS. On September 12, 2000, a Notice of Intent announcing the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement was published in the *Federal Register*. Scoping was reopened from September 12 to October 9, 2000 and extended again until November 30, 2000. The NPS received over 2500 comments during the official scoping periods, including over 500 individual letters and comment forms, plus form letters, postcards and petitions.

In January 2002, a "Protection Strategies Worksheet" was distributed to the approximately 3000 people on the study mailing list. The worksheet was intended to provide a sense of the NPS approach to the study alternatives; provide an opportunity for specific input into the alternatives; and, to provide the NPS with information to ensure that the study alternatives were accurate and responsive. The worksheet included two maps of the study area which the public could use to provide their comments. Comments were accepted through September 1, 2002. Approximately 135 worksheets and over 500 additional individual comments were returned, plus form letters and petitions.

On August 19, 2002, a "Gaviota Coastal Forum" was held in Buellton, Santa Barbara County. The purpose of the forum was to bring together speakers from across the nation to present a diversity of private, local and other land use tools and that could be used in the Gaviota Coast area. The forum was funded by the National Park Service and organized by a committee of agricultural, business and environmental interests, headed by the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce and the Business First National Bank.

A total of over 1200 individual letters and comment forms were received during the study's extended scoping and public input process. In addition, the NPS received 17 sets of form letters from over 2350 people, 2 sets of postcards from approximately 350 people, and 6 sets of petitions, totaling over 5500 signatures. All comments received during the initial phase have been fully

documented and have aided this conservation planning and environmental impact analysis process. A summary of the comments received at various stages in the study process can be found in Appendix E: Comment Summary.

NEWSLETTERS

The NPS study team has published six newsletters to keep community members and others up to date on the study process. The initial mailing list of 900 names was the same as the invitation list for the March 2000 public meetings, and included approximately 300 landowners in the study area. The mailing list grew steadily from 900 names to over 3000 names. Newsletter #1 was mailed out in March 2000. It included information about the start of the study process, the study area, and frequently-asked questions. Newsletter #2 contained frequently-asked questions, a summary of scoping comments, a detailed list of scoping comments, and park case studies. Newsletter #3 in June 2001 provided an update of the study process, a summary of the desired future conditions workshops, and a "fact or fiction" section. Newsletter #4, mailed out in January 2002, included an update of the study process and the Protection Strategies Worksheet, described above. Newsletter #5, in May 2002, provided an update on the status of the study process and included a summary of initial comments on the Protection Strategies Worksheet, a revised map that showed existing local land protection, and a section to answer questions and clarify some misunderstandings regarding the Protection Strategies Worksheet. Newsletter #6, in October 2002, provided an update on the status of the study, a summary of the Coastal Forum, and a summary of all the comments received on the Worksheet.

WEB PAGE

A web page for the Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study (www.nps.gov/pwro/gaviota/) was developed to provide updates on the study. It contained detailed information about the feasibility study process, background information about the study area, and was updated periodically to include all news releases and newsletters.

Agency Consultation

The NPS study team has consulted with federal, state and local agency representatives in conducting this study, beginning in January, 2000. NPS formal and informal consultations have included the agencies and organizations listed below.

INFORMAL CONSULTATION

Federal agencies: Los Padres National Forest, Vandenberg Air Force Base, U.S. Minerals Management Service, Bureau of Land Management, California Coastal National Monument, Channel Islands National Park, Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,

Tribal: Santa Ynez Chumash Band Tribal Council, Barbareno Chumash Committee, Coastal Chumash Band

State agencies: Department of Parks and Recreation, Coastal Commission, State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Fish and Game, Department of Conservation

Local agencies: Santa Barbara County Department of Planning and Development, Santa Barbara County Department of Parks and Recreation, Santa Barbara County Park and Recreation Commission, City of Lompoc, Santa Barbara County Supervisors, Vista del Mar School District, Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner

Non-profit organizations and businesses: Trust for Public Land, Conception Coast Project, Sierra Club, Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau, Gaviota Coast Conservancy, Bixby Ranch Company, Surfrider Foundation, Hollister Ranch Homeowners Association Stewardship Task Force, Cattlemen's Association, Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, TetraTech, Forest Preservation Society, Young America's Foundation, Citizens Planning Association

FORMAL CONSULTATION

In May 2000, the National Park Service sent out a letter to the following Federal and State agencies announcing the commencement of the feasibility study and requesting agency input:

- California Coastal Commission: The commission responded on June 15, 2000 stating their support of the feasibility study and the establishment of a national seashore to improve resource protection and opportunities for public access to the shoreline.
- California Coastal Conservancy
- California Department of Fish and Game
- California Department of Parks and Recreation: The Director of California State Parks responded on June 5, 2000 about participation in the study process.
- California Office of Historic Preservation: The state historic preservation officer sent a response letter offering suggestions on June 27, 2000. The letter stated their availability to provide advise and assistance to NPS in carrying out its Section 106 responsibilities of the National Historic Preservation Act at the time NPS determines it has an undertaking subject to Section 106's implementation regulations.
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
- Los Padres National Forest

Vandenberg Air Force Base: On September 28, 2000, Vandenberg Air Force Base sent a letter to the National Park Service requesting designation as a cooperating agency in this feasibility study process.

Native American Consultation

Members of the study team communicated and consulted informally with various Chumash tribal organizations and affiliated groups beginning in March, 2000 at the public scoping meetings for the study. A Santa Ynez Chumash Band representative participated in the NPS Desired Future Conditions workshop on July 27, 2000. A member of the study team gave a presentation to the Tribal Council of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash on September 9, 2001. At numerous points in the study process, NPS staff had conversations and exchanged correspondence with various representatives of the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash, San Luis Obispo County Chumash Council, Barbareno Chumash Committee, and the Coastal Chumash Band.

List of Agencies and Organizations to Whom Copies of the Draft Feasibility Study Are Being Sent

The Executive Summary of this report is being sent to the entire Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study mailing list, including more than 3000 people and organizations. A postcard was sent to the mailing list allowing recipients to request the full report in either printed or CD-ROM version. The full study report is also posted on the Internet, at www.nps.gov/pwro/gaviota. The following agencies and organizations are on the feasibility study mailing list and are among those that are being sent the draft Gaviota Coast Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment:

FEDERAL AGENCIES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Bureau of Land Management
Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary
Congresswoman Lois Capps
Congressman Elton Gallegly
Department of the Interior
Environmental Protection Agency, Region IX
Fish and Wildlife Service
Los Padres National Forest

Minerals Management Service
Senator Barbara Boxer
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Vandenberg Air Force Base

STATE AGENCIES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

California Coastal Commission
California Coastal Conservancy
Department of Conservation, Office of Land Conservation
Department of Fish and Game
Department of Parks and Recreation
State Assemblywoman Hannah-Beth Jackson
State Historic Preservation Officer
State Senator Tom McClintock

LOCAL AGENCIES AND ELECTED OFFICIALS

Santa Barbara County
City of Santa Barbara
City of Goleta
City of Lompoc
City of Solvang
City of Santa Maria
Vista del Mar Union School District

ORGANIZATIONS

Coastal Stewardship Council
Community Environmental Council
Gaviota Coast Conservancy
Hollister Ranch Homeowners Association
Land Trust for Santa Barbara County
Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau
Sierra Club
Trust for Public Land

TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Barbareno Chumash Committee
Chumash Council of Bakersfield
Coastal Band of Chumash
Santa Ynez Indian Reservation
United Chumash Council